

## VOLGA GERMAN CLOTHING

To Kansans whose entire life had been spent in the United States, Volga Germans were a peculiar sight when they stepped off the train. Many of the men wore long coats gathered in at the waist with a belt, making the lower part of the coat flare out like a skirt. This schafpelz was made of sheepskin with the wool on the inside of the coat. Such a heavy coat was needed during a Russian winter, but the Volga German soon found that it was too warm for mild Kansas temperatures. On his head, he sported either a peaked fur hat called a schirmmuk, or a cap like the one in this kit called a carduse. His hair was long and fell straight from the crown of his head. On his feet, he wore felt boots or Filzstiefel. These took the place of socks and were covered by heavy leather boots with shafts. He tucked his trousers into the shaft of his high boots.

A woman's clothing was distinctive, but not as unusual to American eyes. The Volga German hausfrau wore a dark skirt and blouse and often covered the skirt with a long apron. Her head was covered with a shawl or heavy scarf.

If a woman was wealthy, or if it was a special occasion, the shawl might be embroidered along the edge with flowers.

All Volga German clothing was sturdy and heavy, made for long days of work in the fields or for days in the küche cooking or in the bachhaus washing, churning butter, making sauerkraut, etc.

Although many of their children soon adopted American dress, the original immigrants to Kansas continued to wear their distinctive clothing well into the twentieth century. It was another tie to village tradition and the old ways of living that they were slow to abandon.